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Two who died were from Montana, Wyoming

By TOM LACEKY
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HELENA, Mont. -- Pfc. Kristofor Stonesifer, one of two U.S. Army Rangers killed in the crash of a Black Hawk helicopter, quit ROTC last year because it wasn't tough enough for him. "All I really knew was, he wanted to be the best soldier in the U.S. Army, and the best soldiers in the Army are in the Ranger battalion," said Lt. Col. Jim Clegg, professor of military science and head of the ROTC program at the University of Montana, where Stonesifer went to school. The Pentagon said yesterday that Stonesifer, 28, and Spc. Jonn J. Edmunds, 20, of Cheyenne, Wyo., were the Rangers killed in Pakistan when the helicopter crashed during poor visibility as the United States launched its attacks on terrorist strongholds in Afghanistan. They served with the 75th Ranger Regiment based at Fort Benning, Ga., the Army said. Clegg said that Stonesifer dropped out of ROTC after junior year and enlisted in the Army because the ROTC unit was not intense enough for him. Stonesifer joined the program at the Missoula campus in August 1999 and continued until his enlistment in May 2000, Clegg said. "He was a very mature and focused young man, one of my top two cadets in a very challenging year, that's the junior year in an ROTC program," Clegg said. "He was a little older, and he had been around a little bit. He made better decisions than some of the younger cadets made."

Tim Woodard, Edmunds' driver education teacher at Cheyenne East High School, said he was "a very nice young man" who liked playing intramural sports.

"His goal was to go into the military. He really wanted to do that."

Edmunds graduated in 1999.

Officials would not disclose the role of the Black Hawk, but some believed it was preparing to cross into Afghanistan in the event any Rangers had to be rescued.

Capt. Elizabeth Ortiz, an Air Force spokeswoman in Europe, said the bodies were flown to Germany's Ramstein Air Base.

"Appropriate military honors were rendered when they arrived," she said yesterday. She declined to say when the remains would be returned to the United States.

Dead Rangers seen as solid soldiers

Washington Times
October 22, 2001

HELENA, Mont. (AP) - Pfc. Kristofor Stonesifer, one of two U.S. Army Rangers killed in the crash of a Black Hawk helicopter, quit ROTC last year because it wasn't tough enough for him.

"All I really knew was, he wanted to be the best soldier in the U.S. Army, and the best soldiers in the Army are in the Ranger battalion," said Lt. Col. Jim Clegg, professor of military science and head of the ROTC program at the University of Montana, where Pfc. Stonesifer went to school. The Pentagon announced yesterday that Pfc. Stonesifer, 28, and Spc. Jonn J. Edmunds, 20, of Cheyenne, Wyo., were the Rangers killed in Pakistan when the helicopter crashed during poor visibility as the United States mounted its attacks on terrorist strongholds in Afghanistan. They served with the 75th Ranger Regiment based at Fort Benning, Ga., the Army said.

Col. Clegg said that after his junior year, Pfc. Stonesifer dropped out of ROTC and enlisted in the Army because the ROTC unit was not intense enough for him. He joined the program at the Missoula campus in August 1999 and continued until his enlistment in May 2000, Col. Clegg said.

"He was a very mature and focused young man, one of my top two cadets in a very challenging year, that's the junior year in an ROTC program," Col. Clegg said. "He was a little older, and he had been around a little bit. He made better decisions than some of the younger cadets made."

Pfc. Stonesifer was "a solid student" academically and "was learning the skills required to be a second lieutenant, leadership skills," Col. Clegg said.

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Sen. Mike B. Enzi, Wyoming Republican, said in a prepared statement that the deaths would bring people in his state closer together "as we grieve with the families of the fallen, help those in need and stand up against our enemies."

"I'm proud of Specialist Edmunds and Private [First Class] Stonesifer and all of the men and women who put their lives on the line for our country," Mr. Enzi said. "We are behind you."